



Congressman Jon Porter

Monthly Update

May 2004

Porter Report – Monthly Update



As your Representative in Congress, I am proud to represent Nevada's Third Congressional District, one of the fastest growing regions in the United States.

This past month I have been busy working on several issues important to our State, including hosting a Lake Mead Summit where I was joined by US Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton. Also, last month I held a series of town

hall meetings to address identity theft and continued our state's fight against Yucca Mountain.

Focus on Lake Mead - Porter Hosts "Resources and Recreation: 2004 Lake Mead Summit"



Porter was joined at the Lake Mead Summit by US Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton

On April 19, I was proud to host *Resources and Recreation: 2004 Lake Mead Summit*, a summit meeting to focus on Lake Mead. Accompanied by US Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton, the Summit brought key stakeholders together to discuss ways to improve Lake Mead and work toward enhancing the natural resources of the lake.

The summit included environmental experts, water officials, tour operators, marina owners, and numerous officials from federal agencies that have a role in the Lake. The gathering was designed to raise the awareness and focus on the needs at Lake Mead National Recreation Area (NRA) and work to bring about long term improvements. The Lake Mead summit modeled similar cooperative meetings that have successfully been held at Lake Tahoe in northern Nevada.

Following formal presentations by a panel of experts, then a roundtable discussion, Secretary Norton and I toured some of the Lake's recreation

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facilities at Hemenway Harbor including portions of a \$6.5 million launch ramp improvement. We also visited and stepped aboard the "Forever Earth" floating environmental laboratory, a converted houseboat that is used as a science education tool for students.

The summit marked the first time that local, state, and federal officials have come together to discuss ways to improve the many recreational opportunities and resources that the Lake Mead NRA has to offer. The Lake is critical to the Las Vegas Valley for a variety of reasons such as water supply, power generation, recreation, and supporting our economic base for tourism. The annual economic impact of the Lake Mead NRA and its millions of visitors to the region exceeds \$1 billion.



Following the Summit, Porter and Secretary Norton toured the *Forever Earth*, a floating environmental laboratory used for education programs at Lake Mead NRA

Last year, nine million people visited the Lake Mead NRA, the nation's first established recreation area. Twice the size of Rhode Island, the NRA covers 1.3 million acres of land and another 200,000 acres of water. Located at the meeting point of four desert ecosystems, Lake Mead NRA contains surprising diversity, including some species that can be found nowhere else in the world.

There is no doubt that the Lake has experienced challenges like never before. The current drought has lowered the lake from its

capacity of 1,220 feet to 1,139 feet. It costs nearly \$5 to \$6 million to maintain the level of services for every 20-foot drop such as moving marinas and docks from sites that have been left high and dry. Despite the challenges Lake Mead NRA faces, the Lake is open for business and still provides some of the best water and land recreational venues in the nation.

Later this summer, I hope to have a report ready to present to the Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee Richard Pombo (R-CA) for possible legislation to obtain more funding to address the issues at Lake Mead. The report will serve as a blueprint to address the serious challenges of the five-year drought, water quality issues, and access to the Lake that has ever-rising infrastructure costs. Other critical issues that need to be addressed include recreation facility upgrades, national park service staffing levels at Lake Mead NRA, and security. About \$44 million from the sale of public lands in southern Nevada have gone toward projects in the recreation area over the past few years, but more needs to be done.

I am committed to doing all I can to help revitalize the Lake Mead NRA and ensure that its natural resources are protected, and that the multiple functions the Lake provides to southern Nevada continue for decades to come. By working together, we can identify a blueprint to bring about long term improvements at Lake Mead that will allow the Lake to remain the crown jewel of southern Nevada.

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Porter Accepts Grant From US Secretary of Transportation Norm Mineta



Congressman Porter serves as a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in the US House of Representatives

Recently I met with the US Secretary of Transportation Norm Mineta to accept a check in the amount of \$1.4 million for transportation projects in Southern Nevada.

I appreciate Secretary Mineta's support in seeing that Nevada gets its fair share of transportation funding. Southern Nevada is one of the fastest growing regions in the nation, and I will continue to do all I can in the US Congress to ensure that Nevada receives the federal dollars that will allow us to keep up with surface transportation needs.

Some of the projects tapped to receive the \$1.4 million in funding include the Lake Mead/Lake Las Vegas interchange and a study for a bridge over the Colorado River connecting Laughlin, NV and Bullhead City, AZ. The funding represents a portion of the total funding allocated in the 2004 Transportation and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Porter Holds Town Hall Meetings on Identity Theft



Congressman Porter held three identity theft town hall meetings in April. Additional information on identity theft can be found at www.house.gov/Porter

Last month I held a series of town hall meetings in Southern Nevada focused on identity theft, one of America's growing crime problems. Joining with me were representatives of the Federal Trade Commission, Internal Revenue Service, US Postal Inspection Service, and local law enforcement. The town halls, held over the course of three evenings in three different locations, provided information on learning how to protect yourself from becoming a victim of identity theft and what you can do if you have already been victimized.

During the 1990s a new form of fraud appeared in which ID thieves steal personal information such as credit card account numbers, Social Security information, or a driver's license number. Thieves then open accounts in a

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consumer's name and run up charges on the account or use personal information to charge goods and services to a consumer's existing accounts.

The harm caused by identity theft can be devastating. It is my hope that the information provided at my town hall meetings will be able to help prevent further crimes in Southern Nevada. I have also provided information on identity theft on website at www.house.gov/Porter for anyone who was unable to attend one of my town halls.

Nevada Congressional Delegation Calls for Extended Comment Period, Additional Meetings on Impact of Yucca Rail Plan



Over concerns that current plans are inadequate to address the enormous impact of the proposed rail route to Yucca Mountain, I recently joined with the rest of the Nevada Congressional Delegation to call for an extension of the time period for comments on the plan and the scheduling of additional scoping meetings in communities that would be affected by thousands of shipments of high-level nuclear waste.

In a letter to the US Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham, I joined Senators Harry Reid and John Ensign, along with Representatives Shelley Berkley and Jim Gibbons, in calling for a minimum 90 day comment period on the Department of Energy's (DOE) plan to construct a Yucca Mountain rail spur. Current plans by DOE call only for a 45 day comment period.

In our letter, we also called for additional meetings on the rail plan to be scheduled in Las Vegas and Reno and in communities outside the Silver State that would be impacted by decades of waste shipments to Yucca Mountain. Locations for meetings outside Nevada would be chosen based on the routing of nuclear waste shipments to the proposed Caliente rail spur. The new meetings would be in addition to the current plans for sessions in the Nevada communities of Armogosa Valley, Goldfield, and Caliente.

Contact Me

Should you require any additional information, if you would like to inform me of your views, or if you require assistance with your interactions with the Federal Government, please contact me anytime in either my Henderson, NV or Washington, DC office. You can also find information available online at www.house.gov/Porter.

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